

## Wounded Warrior Help

This information was approved for release by IMCOM.

Sentinels of Freedom Group Offers 'Life Scholarships'

WASHINGTON - Academic scholarships  [<http://aid.military.com/scholarship/search-for-scholarships.do>](http://aid.military.com/scholarship/search-for-scholarships.do) are plentiful for servicemembers wanting to further their education, but for wounded troops, simply re-integrating into civilian life can be emotionally and financially costly.

The Sentinels of Freedom Scholarship Foundation  [<http://www.sentinelsoffreedom.org/>](http://www.sentinelsoffreedom.org/) is helping to ease the burden on wounded troops. The Danville, Calif.-based organization is offering four-year "Life Scholarships" to help smooth severely wounded servicemembers' transition  [<http://transition.military.com/reg/transition\\_center\\_registration.do>](http://transition.military.com/reg/transition_center_registration.do) to the rest of their lives.

"When it comes to returning severely injured (servicemembers), we just needed to do more," Mike Conklin, the foundation's founder, said. "I felt it was our responsibility, so I developed a plan and we started with one person."

Three years after the program began, six servicemembers have been awarded scholarships.

Resources for Severely Injured Servicemembers  
 [<http://www.military.com/support>](http://www.military.com/support)

Conklin's three sons, all Army Rangers, served as his inspiration to create the program. One of his sons was injured while serving in Iraq in 2003.

"I was very impressed with the military medical system," Conklin said. "That kind of drove me to want to do more."

The program encourages community involvement and offers assistance based on a servicemember's particular needs. Services provided can include rent-free housing adapted for physical needs, new furniture and household supplies, and new adaptive vehicles.

"Sentinels," as the scholarship recipients are called, also receive career-placement assistance, educational opportunities, and financial and personal mentorship.

"The biggest part of this is mentoring," Conklin said. "We surround them with a team of 10 business people in that community who are professionals."

That group, which can include financial planners, doctors, lawyers and a former servicemember to help navigate military benefits  [<http://www.military.com/Benefits/0,14972,,00.htm>](http://www.military.com/Benefits/0,14972,,00.htm) , stays with an individual for the entire four-year period to help with specific areas of the transition, including career placement or housing, for example.

Servicemembers who have suffered a service-related injury that has left them a paraplegic, with amputated limbs, blind, deaf or severely burned qualify for the scholarship. While those are the main criteria, successful candidates must have something else, Conklin said.

"We look for (someone) ... that wants to move forward, that wants to move on from just being in the disabled ranks," he said. "We look for that young man or woman that has fire in their eye and wants to move forward."

Those interested in the program can fill out a questionnaire and release on the Sentinels of Freedom Web site. This allows Conklin to open a case file and review individual situations. He cautions that the program is not a handout, however. "This is an earn-while-you-learn scholarship," he said.

That means participants are expected to stay in school, maintain a job and moral standards, and take the community team's mentoring advice to heart.

Sentinels of Freedom is one of the newest members of America Supports You, a Defense Department program connecting citizens and corporations with military personnel and their families serving at home and abroad.

One of America Supports You's newest corporate supporters, RE/MAX, has been one of Sentinels of Freedom's largest supporters, Conklin said. The real estate company has enabled the organization to grow tremendously.

"It's a very unique company in the fact that it has 6,500 offices around the United States, 120,000 agents and brokers around the United States -- professional people who know everything about their community," Conklin said. "That's a tremendous network for us that has helped us move from local to national.

Others corporations working with Sentinels of Freedom include Chevron, AT&T, UPS, DHL, the Boeing Company, and many other defense-industry contractors, he said.

With the help of these corporations and others like them, Conklin hopes to award at least 500 scholarships with five years.

"We hope that this will be built into an enduring, sustaining scholarship program for this war and all future wars," he said.

For more information or to apply, visit the Sentinels of Freedom Scholarship Foundation <<http://www.sentinelsoffreedom.org/>> website.

More Wounded Warrior News <<http://www.military.com/wounded-warriors>>

#### Related Links

\* Troops to Teachers Scholarships  
<<http://education.military.com/money-for-school/troops-to-teachers-scholarships>>

\* Operation Education: Helps Injured Vets Reach Their Goals  
<<http://education.military.com/money-for-school/operation-education-helps-injured-vets-reach-their-goals>>

\* Avoid Out-of-Pocket Fees <<http://education.military.com/money-for-school/avoid-out-of-pocket-fees>>

\* Special Feature: Little Known Education Resources  
<<http://education.military.com/money-for-school/special-feature-little-known-education-resources>>

\* Higher Education Reconciliation  
<<http://education.military.com/money-for-school/higher-education-reconciliation>>

\* More States to Offer Scholarships  
<<http://education.military.com/money-for-school/more-states-to-offer-scholarships>>

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<<http://www.military.com/LeadForms/NewsLetterSignup>>

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\* Money For School <<http://education.military.com/getting-your-degree/step-4-use-your-benefits-to-pay-for-school>>

\* Active Duty <<http://education.military.com/money-for-school/active-duty/active-duty-education-benefits-users-guide>>

\* Guard <<http://education.military.com/money-for-school/guard/guard-education-benefits-users-guide>>

\* Reserve <<http://education.military.com/money-for-school/reserve/reserve-education-benefits-users-guide>>

\* Veteran <<http://education.military.com/money-for-school/veteran/veteran-education-benefits-users-guide>>

\* Spouse & Family <<http://education.military.com/money-for-school/spouse-family/military-spouse-and-family-educational-assistance-programs>>

\* GI Bill <<http://education.military.com/money-for-school/gi-bill/learn-to-use-your-gi-bill>>

\* Finding a School <<http://education.military.com/getting-your-degree/step-3-find-right-military-friendly-school>>

\* Certification/Vocational  
<<http://education.military.com/finding-a-school/vocational-technical-and-trade-schools>>

\* Colleges <<http://education.military.com/finding-a-school/colleges-and-universities>>  
\* Graduate School <<http://education.military.com/finding-a-school/graduate-school>>

\* Timesaving Programs <<http://education.military.com/getting-your-degree/step-5-learn-to-save-time-and-money>>

\* Credit for Service  
<<http://education.military.com/timesaving-programs/college-credit-for-military-experience>>

\* Credit-by-Exam  
<<http://education.military.com/timesaving-programs/dantes-college-credit-by-examination-program>>

\* DANTES <<http://education.military.com/timesaving-programs/defense-activity-for-non-traditional-education-support-dantes>>

\* Veterans Upward Bound  
<<http://education.military.com/timesaving-programs/veterans-upward-bound-vub>>

<[http://images.military.com/edu/lbl\\_ad\\_left.gif](http://images.military.com/edu/lbl_ad_left.gif)>

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Site Map <<http://www.military.com/sitemap/>> | Spouse Buzz  
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